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SPECTRUM

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SOUTH ATLANTIC DIVISION

VOL. 1 NO. 2

South Atlantic Division Supports Transformation & BRAC

CONTENTS

ON THE COVER:

As the Army continues its transformation to a leaner fighting force, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is adapting to the change by constructing or renovating such buildings as barracks, dining halls and medical facilities.
See story on Page 4.

Division Welcomes New Commander, BG Joe Schroedel

I am proud to join this great division and look forward to working with you to extend our proud tradition of world class public engineering. Now, more than ever, our nation is depending on our continued selfless service and dedication. Our contributions to the Global War on Terrorism in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world, as well as our military construction efforts are enhancing our national security. Our contributions to the management and improvement of our water resources and infrastructure are enhancing our nation's economy. And, our contributions to the sustainability of our natural resources are preserving our environment for future generations.

As we move forward to tackle the challenges of this critical period in our history, we will work together as a regional team to deliver the best quality projects, on time, within budget, safely, and in accordance with our Environmental Operating Principles. We will partner with our federal, state, and local sponsors to leverage each others' authorities and capabilities to make the most of every resource available to us. We will build trust with those we serve by developing and sustaining open and meaningful relationships. And lastly, we will invest in the development of our people in order to sustain the highest quality workforce.

The opportunities of these dynamic times call for us to be people of action. We have the talent our nation needs to turn any challenge into a benefit for the American people. Thanks for who you are and for what you do every day to make a difference.

Deeds Not Words!

Best Wishes Always,
Joe Schroedel

SPECTRUM

The South Atlantic Division Commander
Brig. Gen. Joe Schroedel

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Chief, Public Affairs

Jacksonville District
Nancy Sticht
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USACE contractors position modular housing and command center units (above) for more than 400 Soldiers at Hunter Army Airfield and furnish units with electrical and cable lines (below right).

PHOTOS BY JONAS JORDAN

Corps Sets Pace in Response to Transformation, BRAC Challenges

BY: SARAH MCCLEARY, SAVANNAH DISTRICT

Army Transformation – these words are virtually engrained in the vocabulary of every Army employee. To the Soldier, this means a likely move to another installation, a new way of training, and a unit-based force containing all components needed to go to war. But what do these words mean for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers?

A unique entity within the Army's infrastructure, the Corps of Engineers supports Army missions and delivers solutions for its engineering challenges. "Today's challenge is dealing with the effects of three large events happening at one time," said Joe Caggiano, Savannah District assistant chief of construction division. "Army transformation is just one of them. We are also working hard to meet Soldiers' needs due to Base Realignment and Closure and the return of Soldiers stationed in Europe."

As the Army transforms to a more mobile, responsive force through base closings and realignment of units, the Corps must transform installations through construction and renovation of facilities such as barracks, military family housing, dining halls and medical clinics at selected U.S. installations. The Army transformation and BRAC bring more opportunities to the Corps' military construction division. "We are a big gainer in BRAC," said Tim Corley, Savannah District chief of military programs and project management branch. The challenge – the preparation of these installations for the flood of incoming Soldiers must be achieved in record-breaking time.

The Corps' South Atlantic Division has two districts that manage design and construction at military installations. Combined, Savannah and Mobile districts oversee new military construction and renovation work at 20 U.S. Army installations and 17 U.S. Air Force bases. Mobile District has an additional role in the BRAC process. The Army selected SAM to

execute the BRAC 2005 National Environmental Policy Act program.

"Because Army transformation is occurring alongside BRAC and the repositioning of Soldiers stationed overseas back to the states, the Corps is changing the way it does business," said Caggiano. "We are finding ways to provide the needed structures by standardizing facilities and making the process cheaper and faster."

First, the Corps refined the bidding process , now using the Military Transformation Request for Proposal system to obtain bids. In MTRFP, the focus for decision makers is the contractor's past performance, according to Caggiano. The Corps design team no longer provides drawings; now it provides a specific criteria list for each structure. "This helps to speed the process along while acquiring the best industry design and best quality from the bidding contractor," said Corley.

Second, strict specification codes, which previously bound the Corps of Engineers, no longer apply. Now industry specifications and standards are used. "If it's good enough for private industry, why not the federal government?" asked Caggiano. Private industry standards meet state and federal requirements for construction and allow the Corps to put up new facilities rapidly. This saves money and time, since the old specification codes required more time and supplies per square foot than industry standards.

Third, creating facilities using standard designs means Corps employees don't "reinvent the wheel" in the design phase of construction. Six centers of standardization will be responsible for the development and execution of certain facilities. Savannah District is one such district actively engaged in setting standard designs, according to Tom Brockbank, Savannah centers of standardization program manager. Savannah standardizes the design for command and control facilities for division and corps headquarters, brigade headquarters, battalion headquarters, company operations facilities, tactical equipment maintenance facilities, and brigade operations complexes.

"Mobile is the center of standardization for aviation and four-star headquarters," said Tom Whiteside, Mobile centers of standardization program manager. "This means we will be responsible for the development and operational facilities supporting Army aviation and headquarters for the commands responsible for providing and deploying Army forces." This standardization allows other districts to use these plans, changing them only to accommodate specific site needs.

Fourth, the urgency to provide housing and other facilities for Soldiers gives the Corps leeway to develop innovative solutions, such as the modular housing project at Fort Stewart, Ga. The repositioning of units from Europe to U.S. installations faced one major challenge – no available housing. As Soldiers overseas awaited housing at Fort Stewart, Savannah District reacted quickly and placed modular facilities at the site providing a creative solution. It only took 142 days from the time the contract was awarded until Soldiers moved into their new barracks.

Funding for military construction projects resulting from Army transformation and BRAC will increase over the next few years. "Savannah District's normal military construction budget will double in fiscal year 2007 from $500 million to more than $1 billion," relayed Corley. "We have 18 BRAC-related projects alone."

Through the use of the MTRFP, the Corps will use quality designs from industry to construct cost-effective facilities in less time and will create a standardized approach to providing military facilities. The real question is not, "What does Army transformation mean to the Corps of Engineers?", but, "Can the Army keep up with the Corps of Engineers?"

Mobile District Chosen to Execute 2005 Base Realignment and Closure NEPA Program

BY LISA COGHLAN

21st Century Military

The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round resulted in 25 major Department of Defense installations being marked for closure, 24 others identified for major realignment, and 764 smaller actions. The recommendations represent the most aggressive BRAC action ever proposed, affecting more than 800 installations. This action has resulted in the single biggest change in Army basing since before World War II. The Department of Defense is realigning its global force posture to transform from a Cold War stance to one geared toward 21st century threats.

Based upon a request by the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, BRAC Division, the Headquarters U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Directorate of Military Programs, designated South Atlantic Division, Mobile District, to execute the Army's BRAC 2005 National Environmental Policy Act program.

This request was based on Mobile District's extensive experience with the prior four Army BRAC rounds in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995 as well as the district's broad experience in working with Army installations and commands. The Mobile District organized and oversaw the BRAC National Environmntal Policy Act (NEPA) support team for each prior BRAC rounds. The NEPA Support Team (NST) provided oversight and quality control for all NEPA documents prepared for Army installation realignment or closure actions.

According to Brian Peck, NST deputy, "this is the largest single NEPA program ever undertaken by the Army and any other federal agency. We have a total of 185 NEPA documents, eight environmental impact statements and 177 environmental assessments."

The Team

The reconstituted NST and will have overall responsibility for the execution of the Army BRAC 2005 NEPA program. The size and composition of this virtual team will be adjusted as necessary to contract for and oversee the preparation of Army BRAC NEPA documents and supporting studies. The NST is responsible for quality control and ensuring that all BRAC NEPA documents and supporting studies comply with applicable federal and state laws and regulations and Army policy. The affected installations and higher commands will also conduct document reviews.

According to Brian Peck, "early in FY04, team members were chosen from various district offices. The team consists of Corps and Army NEPA specialists and environmental subject matter experts. Many of the project mangers and technical personnel were involved in previous BRAC rounds." Susan Holtham, NST deputy, and Dr. Neil Robison, NST executive agent, participated in all four prior BRAC rounds.

Currently, 20 NST project and technical managers have been designated within the Mobile, Savannah, New England, Fort Worth and Norfolk districts. The NEPA PMs will prepare government cost estimates, scopes of work, negotiate task orders and oversee all details concerning preparation of the NEPA documents assigned to them. The technical specialists are subject matter experts who ensure that any concerns related to their area of expertise are appropriately evaluated during the NEPA process. NST technical specialists include experts on cultural resources, threatened and endangered species, hazardous wastes, noise, air quality, socio-economics and environmental justice.

Article continued on page 14

Munitions Experts Part of Award-Winning Community Relations Team

BY DEBRA VALINE, HUNTSVILLE CENTER

While evaluating a residential community on what used to be Camp Wheeler near Macon, Ga., inspectors found a 60-mm mortar under leaf litter. Mortars also have been found within 13 feet of homes in that area.

These inspections are being conducted under the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS), Military Munitions Response Program, managed by the Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville. To date, 1,691 former military sites have been identified, with 600-700 sites expected to be contaminated with unexploded ordnance. The former Camp Wheeler is one of them.

Partners in this project include Savannah District; Huntsville Center; EOD Technology, Inc.; and the residents on the former Camp Wheeler property.

It was Savannah District's expertise in working with the community on this project that led to the district winning the Locke L. Mouton Community Relations Award, presented by Headquarters, Corps of Engineers.

"This has been a huge community relations success because we are telling the residents the truth," said Chris Cochrane, project management specialist with Huntsville Center's Ordnance and Explosives Design Center.

The team kept the community informed and involved in the project through public meetings, news releases and a Web site.

"The community remains supportive of the project," said Billy Birdwell, Savannah District chief of public affairs. "Local officials have gained insight into the efforts of the Corps and FUDS program."

Cochrane said the most successful meeting was in February where question and answer stations were set up around the cafeteria in a local school.

"The residents are so grateful that they make brownies for the field workers and leave them on the porch before they evacuate," she said.

When Corps employees and contractors are doing intrusive field work, residents must be evacuated for their safety.

"Because we are working in a neighborhood, we are working closely with the residents," Cochrane said. "We need to gain rights of entry before we can do this work. Most of the people are very cooperative."

Residents who do not work outside the home during the day are evacuated to hotel rooms, paid for by the project.

"Monday through Thursday we do intrusive field work and residents have to be gone," Cochrane said. "On Fridays, we run the magnetometer over the ground and any time we find a magnetic anomaly — it could be a bomb, pipe or even a tuna can — we mark it with a flag and spray paint. When we go in Monday through Thursday, we dig up the anomalies."

So far, about 40 60-mm mortars have been removed from people's yards. These are high explosive rounds, not training rounds.

A Brief history of Camp Wheeler

The former Camp wheeler encompasses more than 14,000 acres that were used to train replacement troops during World Wars I and II. Munitions being removed now date to the Second World War.

Camp Wheeler was declared excess in 1946 and deactivated. In 1947, follow-on de-dudding operations were conducted. This consisted of picking up unexploded ordnance off the surface. "They did not have the technology at that time to get below the surface," Cochrane said.

"The lessons learned from this effort include the need for early discussions with the public and frankness with the media and officials," Birdwell said.

Reach Back and Touch Some...Infr

Imagine that you are deployed half-way around the world and you have just been given a seemingly impossible engineering task such as repair a dam flood gate, build a military base camp, rehabilitate a partially destroyed hospital, build a bridge or repair a bombed out railroad switch yard.

After replying, "Yes, sir!" and having a momentary panic attack, you realize this has been done before and start identifying the information you need to complete the mission. You need designs, cost estimates, Geographic Information System interactive maps, flood analysis and you need them NOW!

The first call you make is to the Engineering Infrastructure and Intelligence Reachback Center in Mobile District.

BY LTC JOSEPH MILLER, MOBILE DISTRICT

Under the Field Force Engineering doctrine, the Corps of Engineers harnesses the expertise of the 35,000 civilian engineers to support the deployed engineers around the world. The Engineer Infrastructure and Intelligence Reachback Center (EI2RC) is the "information hub" that has managed more than a 1,000 requests from the deployed engineers since 2003.

The center's small staff military and civilian staff includes a master planner, a physical scientist, a Geographic Information System (GIS) technician, a document manager, an intelligence analyst an operations officer, a team leader and as needed subject matter experts from throughout the corps.

The small local office of seven people has a worldwide customer base. Requests for assistance have come from Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Federal Emergency Management Agency and State Department personnel. The center supports the Global War on Terrorism, civil and military deployments, disaster relief efforts for natural disasters such as hurricanes, tsunamis and earthquakes. It also supports major combatant command training exercises such as Exercise Ulchi Focus Lens in Korea, and the Department of Defense Exercise Ardent Sentry as well as the Republic of Korea-U.S. command post exercise Reception, Staging, Onward movement and Integration.

"Our database contains the maps, designs, cost estimates and other needed engineering information that can be tailored to support deployed engineers, unit maneuvers or personnel supporting disaster recovery efforts," said Warren Neiden, team leader for the center.

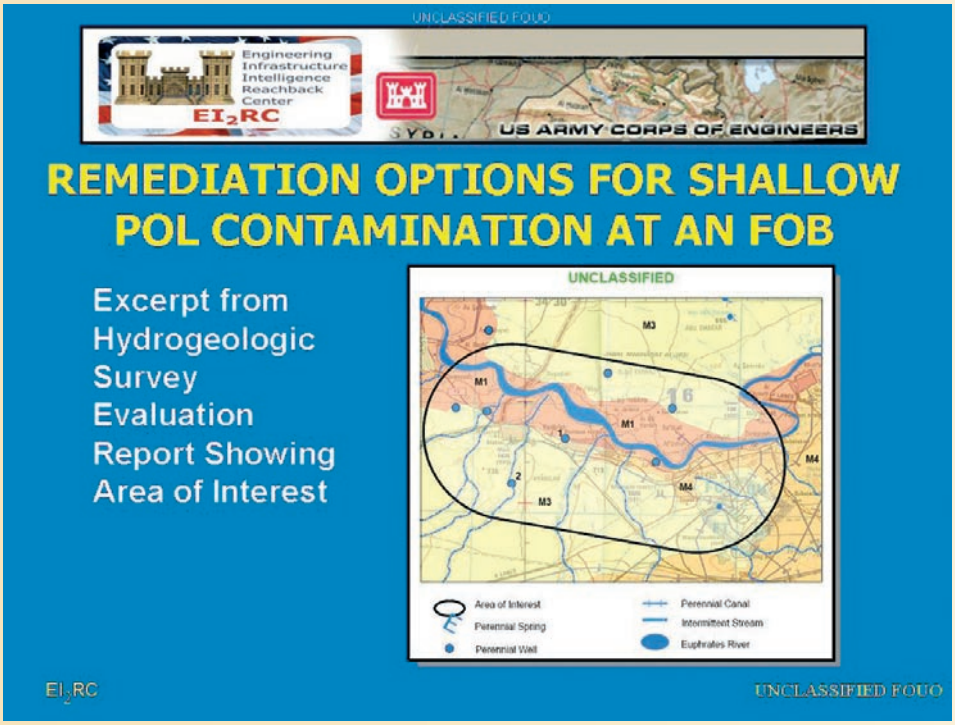
Customers have several options for submitting a request for information (RFI) to the EI2RC. The RFI may be sent via classified or unclassified e-mail, the center's website, telephone or video teleconference. The RFI is a request for technical assistance that required funding and approval.

The center has received RFIs for GIS data, infrastructure assessments, environmental assessments as well as disaster relief support. This small shop has processed requests for intelligence analysis, dam breach and flood analysis, electrical design and analysis as well as route analysis and bridge Multiline Communications Controller (MLC). They have provided designs for base camps, for entry control points, for anti-terrorism/force protection, for water and wastewater treatment systems, for bridge repairs, for dam repairs, for airports, for port facilities, for railroads and for roadways.

Each approved RFI receives a unique tracking number and an assignment to the base development team, labs, school, design center, mandatory centers of expertise or the private sector for completion.

The base development team is a multi-disciplined team of approximately 12 engineers from Baltimore, Tulsa, Louisville, Alaska, Mobile, Little Rock, New England, Seattle, Fort Worth and Hawaii districts. A rotational on call system is used to tap the BDT engineering expertise. The labs are comprised of the Engineering Research and Design Center

astructure and Intelligence Data



This a sample of a map product the Engineering Infrastructure and Intelligence Reachback Center provided in response to a customer's request for information.

and the Tele-engineering Operations Center located in Vicksburg, Miss. The EI2RC team serves as the project manager until the customer is satisfied with the deliverable product.

"Our customers can use the search tools to check the status of their requests for information, to search for similar projects that can be adapted for their needs and check the progress of their projects," said Lynn Copeland Hardegree, Ph.D., the EI2RC team's physical scientist. "Our overseas customers can check the data when they need to and not depend on us being in the office."

Hardegree explained that the center's customers can also do an online search of collected infrastructure assessments using Geospatial Assessment Tool for Engineering Reachback (GATER). This application tool provides a three-tier business process which consists of field data collection, a desktop application that synchronizes field data and online GIS mapping.

She explained when the uploaded field infrastructure assessments populate the EI2RC's Internet Mapping Service. When used in conjunction with the infrastructure intelligence capability, the customer has infrastructure assessments and corresponding intelligence data right at their fingertips. Currently, GATER provides site-specific basemap data and standardized data collection modules for critical infrastructure assessments, real property, environmental site surveys, and environmental closure surveys.

The information you need to do a remote-location project is at your fingertips if you call the EI2RC.

Deployed customers can submit a request for information...

- By e-mailing the EI2RC at CEEI2RC@usace.army.mil on NIPR
- By e-mailing the EI2RC at OrgMboxCEEI2RC@usace.army.smil.mil on SIPR
- Through the unclassified website at http://ei2rc.usace.army.mil
- Through the classified website at http://ei2rc.usace.army.smil.mil
- During unclassified or classified VTCs
- By calling the EI2RC at COM: (251) 690-2039 and DSN: (312) 457-2039

SAJ Helps Jacksonville Residents Visualize Their Community

BY SONYA GOINES, JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT

Jacksonville residents make sketches of what they want their community to look like.

Through a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District initiative, community members became community planners and visionaries as they drafted plans to turn contaminated and unwanted properties into renewed and vibrant communities that will provide safe and healthy environments.

The Corps-sponsored Vision-to-Action project gives citizens in designated "brownfields" areas a chance to see their communities with new eyes. Brownfields is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency classification for communities with industrial or commercial areas that may contain hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants.

Recently, residents of three Jacksonville neighborhoods and the city of Starke drew their vision for a community of the future and shared concepts with neighbors. Many found common themes exist among neighbors.

Residents of Hogans Creek, McCoys Creek and Deer Creek met with Corps officials in two-day visioning sessions. Using the Vision to Action Multi-Vision Integration tool developed by Jim Waddell, Chief of the Military Integration Division for the South Atlantic Division, participants drew and described their ideas for healthier, safer, more attractive communities.

"Participants are encouraged to draw what's in their mind's eye," said Doris Marlin, Jacksonville District project manager and liaison for the Vision-to-Action project.

The Vision-to-Action tool begins with participants drawing visions for their communities and sharing these ideas with other residents. Participants reviews and select other visions that enhance their concept. Integrating the visions shows participants how their vision connects with their neighbors'.

"The primary goal is to identify common threads among community members," said Marlin.

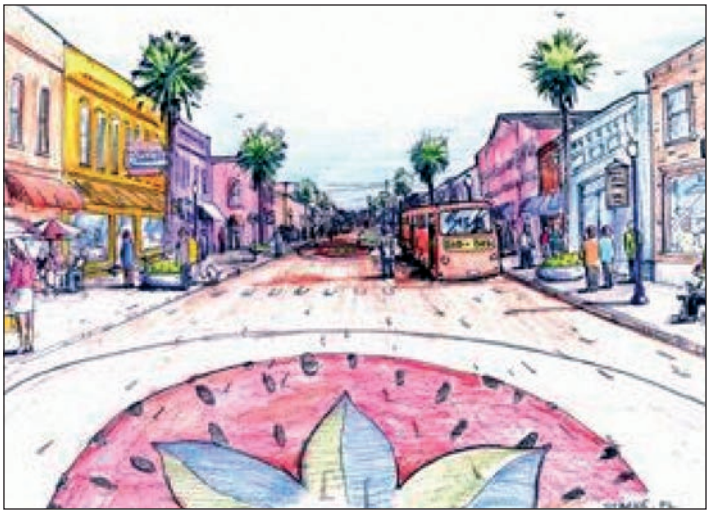
Some common themes seen throughout different communities are clean water, green streets with more flowers and trees, more street lights and the addition of gazebos and parks.

In the next step artist Brian Borello sketches a rendering of the community created through the shared visions. Marlin explained that the rendering is not meant to be the end goal.

"The visioning tool is meant to energize the community members to see the project through," said Marlin.

The artist's rendering becomes a visual concept that can be presented to local leaders to consider as they plan community growth that will provide a better environment for residents. Most importantly, community members play a meaningful role in defining how their communities will be shaped.

Marlin says the EPA will package the Vision-to-Action tool for use nationwide.



Charleston District Hosts State-Wide Water Resources Workshop

BY CONNIE GILLETTE, CHARLESTON DISTRICT

The Charleston District hosted the South Carolina Water Resources Workshop in Columbia, S.C., May 31 and June 1. This two-day workshop, titled, "Working in the Public Interest," brought federal and state agencies, academia and industry together to discuss water resource-related issues. It also provided attendees with a chance to learn about state and federal programs designed to address these issues.

The first day of the workshop focused on water resource issues across the state. The second day focused on regulatory issues.

While this wasn't the first educational workshop the District held, it was the first time planning and regulatory issues were addressed at the same session.

Bill Stein, deputy program manager, explained that in 2004, the district held a small conference for congressional staffers, to provide information concerning federal programs and dollars that are available to meet water resources needs.

"The two-day session was such a huge success that we expanded it this year to include similar presentations by state agencies while increasing the audience to all state and local governments," Stein said.

"The agenda drew excellent reviews, and we look to continue this workshop in the future while hoping to increase audience participation to insure all communities in the state have an opportunity to learn how the state and federal governments can assist in their water resources needs," Stein said.

Approximately 100 people attended the first day's sessions. In addition to comments from Lt. Col. Ed Fleming, Charleston District commander, the attendees heard from John Frampton, director of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

Several panel discussions were held. One for local government representatives focused on major water issues in the state. Another panel focused on the corps' mission and structure and ways the organization can assist local and state agencies and individuals. The day ended with a session titled, "The Road Ahead – SC Water Resource Possibilities," which featured speakers from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, The Palmetto Institute, the U.S. Geological Society, the University of South Carolina and Applied Technology and Management.

The panel that received the most kudos featured congressional staffers speaking candidly about needs and expectations when requesting assistance from elected officials.

The second day of the workshop drew an audience of 80 people. Presentations included overviews of the state and federal regulatory programs as well as discussions concerning information and data exchange throughout the state. Attendees had an opportunity to observe panels on nationwide permits, transportation issues and flood plain issues.

"The workshop was a great success," said Fleming, "Because of the hard work of great people in the Charleston District we were able to meet all of our objectives and posture ourselves for other workshops in the future."

Several organizations contacted the District after the workshop requesting information and inviting corps personnel to meet with them to talk about water-related issues.

"This is exactly what we had hoped would happen," Lisa Metheney, chief of Programs Management Branch said. "Not only do we want to be able to provide information but we also want to stimulate dialogue on water-related issues. We really want this workshop to serve as a beginning for future meetings and engagements with the people we serve – the citizens of South Carolina."

Further information on the workshop, including presentation materials, is available at: www.sac.usace.army.mil/scwater.

Shore Protection Projects May Benefit from New Regional Approach

BY AMANDA ELLISON

Sunshine, white sand and blue water are all trademarks of the beautiful state of Florida. The Sunshine State is known for its pristine shorelines and white beaches; these features draw thousands of people and sea life to the state daily. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the pride of the state remains in top condition. and is able to withstand the forces of wind, wave and water.

Florida's beaches are renourished through beneficial use of dredged material which includes placing sand along the coast. However, these operations can affect threatened or endangered species or their habitats. To minimize these impacts, a biological assessment must be conducted in accordance with the Endangered Species Act. This assessment on the impact on listed species or designated critical habitat is prepared and submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Several protected plant and animal species in Florida must be considered in the biological assessment. These include the piping plovers, five species of sea turtles, several species of beach mice and manatees. Every time a major construction project is considered, a biological assessment must be conducted.

In addition to the normal beach renourishment, the four hurricanes in 2004 that stormed across Florida coastline resulted in 16 emergency beach nourishment projects under a supplemental appropriation from Congress. Restoring 83.4 miles of shoreline required placing approximately 18.5 million cubic yards of sand on the beaches. Each project required a costly, time-consuming biological assessment.

To streamline the process and improve efficiency, a team effort is under way to define a regional biological assessment for sand placement for the entire coast of Florida. This collaborative effort includes Mobile, Jacksonville and Wilmington districts, three USFWS field offices and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The completed assessment will be sent to USFWS for a biological opinion that addresses 17 shore protection projects, 25 navigation projects and numerous regulatory permit actions involving the placement of sand

The USFWS biological opinion determines whether a federal action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a threatened or endangered species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of a critical habitat. The opinion also is expected to contain an "Incidental Take Statement" with reasonable and prudent measures that would minimize impacts and allow the activity to proceed if a member of an endangered species is killed.

"While this is an ambitious undertaking, the ultimate goal of this effort is to have a regional biological opinion with authorization for the incidental take of threatened and endangered species, from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This would greatly reduce the need for individual activity or project-specific biological opinions," says Kenneth Dugger, chief, coastal section, environmental branch, planning division, environmental branch, Jacksonville District.

A typical Florida beach before renourishment...

...and after.

The regional biological opinion will allow dredging and shore protection projects to move forward faster and with lower cost, while also ensuring compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

Beach restoration will continue to be necessary for protecting the Florida Atlantic and Gulf coasts well into the future. Currently, 328 miles of sandy beaches are designated as critically eroded, a condition where previous or continuing erosion threatens private or public development and infrastructure or significant cultural or environmental resources.

For more information, please contact Kenneth Dugger at 904-232-1686 or Kenneth.R.Dugger@saj02.usace.army.mil

A Community Builds Drama and Beauty at the Forest's Edge

BY PENNY SCHMITT

All over America, curtailed budgets are causing cutbacks in community luxuries like recreation and the arts—isn't that right?

"NO WAY!" is the resounding answer that echoes from the hillsides around W. Kerr Scott Lake in Wilkes County, North Carolina. Here, a partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Wilkes Playmakers, and generous citizens and businesses has led to something beautiful for visitors and community alike.

Wilkes County Park, leased from the Corps by Wilkes County, was turned back over to the Corps in 2004 because of aged facilities and scarce funds to renovate. The Corps reopened the park under its own management in 2005, and renamed the facility "Ft. Hamby Park". At that time, some special funding for renovation came to the Corps, but 'some' was not quite enough to fulfill the vision Operations Manager Terry Ramsey and community members held for the park.

The Wilkes Playmakers, long known for their drama "Tom Dooly: A Wilkes County Legend," stepped up and joined in with the Corps. Their dream was to return their historical drama to its original location within the park and build a modern amphitheater that would support not only outdoor drama but also concerts and educational programs. The project soon attracted community interest, and was voted one of the top 10 most important projects on the Wilkes County Blue Ridge Heritage Initiative Plan.

Building the dream

In the summer of 2005, the Wilkes Playmakers donated conceptual drawings to the Corps, saving about $100,000 in planning and design.

Article continued on page 15

Base Realignment, continued from page 6

Program Execution and Schedule

The NEPA requires federal agencies to determine if the proposed actions will have significant environmental or socio-economic impacts. These impact analyses are documented in reports, environmental assessments or environmental impact statements that are made available for public comment and used by agency officials to determine a course of action. The law requires that NEPA analysis is conducted to determine the environmental impacts of BRAC actions. However, the NEPA analyses cannot be used to recommend a course of action that is different from the one directed in the BRAC law.

NEPA documentation is prepared for two primary types of BRAC actions: realignments and closures. Realignment actions involve installations that are receiving new troops and missions from other installations within the continental United States or from overseas facilities. Other installations are being fully or partially closed in accordance with BRAC recommendations. After federal screening, excess lands and buildings will be offered to state and local governmental agencies. These state and local agencies will set up a Local Reuse Authority for planning and community input on the redevelopment of excess installation properties. These property reuse plans, which are to be completed within one year of the Army's real estate screening of surplus property, will be analyzed for environmental impacts in NEPA documents to be prepared by the Army.

The NST used a 13-page questionnaire to gather installation baseline information on the presence of sensitive natural and cultural resources, infrastructure capabilities and socio-economic data. The BRAC-affected installations completed the questionnaires. Then the NST used the questionnaires and in depth interviews with installation and command staff to prepare plans of action for NEPA documents and supporting studies. These plans of action stipulated the level of NEPA documentation to be prepared for each affected installation, required supporting studies and cost estimates to complete the work.

The BRAC NEPA documents are to be awarded in waves, and the installations to be included in each wave will correspond to Army construction or property disposal priorities. It is estimated that five waves of NEPA contracts will be awarded with approximately 35 to 40 NEPA documents per wave. The contract awards will be spaced five months apart over a period of approximately two years.

"...this is the largest single NEPA program ever undertaken by the Army and any other federal agency."

Mobile District has let seven new Architect–Engineer contracts to support the BRAC NEPA program. Each five-year contract was for $6 million. At the request of the Army BRAC, only Mobile District master contracts will be used to execute Army BRAC NEPA documents and any required supporting environmental studies.

According to Dr. Neil Robison "There are no boring days associated with the BRAC 2005 NEPA program. Successfully completing this nationwide program will likely be the most challenging career experience that my teammates and I will ever face."

Forest Edge Ampitheater, continued from page 13

The Corps refined the plans and with the help of its Operations and Maintenance Contractor, Eureka NVT, began construction in September, completing a floor foundation, roof beams and a roof. Then the federal funding ran out.

Thanks to great community spirit, this dream did not die half-built. Instead, W. Kerr Scott staff worked with more than 100 community members to form a new Cooperative Association called "Friends of W. Kerr Scott Lake." These were friends indeed! They set about raising $250,000 in funds and donated materials and in writing successful grant applications that allowed completion of the project.

Among the major contributors to the project were the following: The Wilkes Playmakers, who contributed the original plans; Lowe's Corporation, which provided more than $65,000 in building materials through a community development grant; The Gold Leaf Foundation, which made a $50,000 grant for the theater seating; grants and contributions toward the $110,000 sound and lighting system came from the Pete Kulynych Foundation, the Leonard G. Herring Foundation, Mr. & Mrs. Dwight Pardue, and the Wilkesboro Tourism Development Authority grant of $10,000 provided a sound and light control structure; Dermox, Inc. (owner of Hardees franchises in western NC and Brushy Mountain Smokehouse Restaurant, Wilkesboro) funded the opening ceremony; Duke Power, provided assistance for the electrical power installation; Kerr & Associates provided marketing, grant writing and media support; Other contributors included Carl Rose & Son Paving; Aqua Vibe Water; Jeld Wen; American Drew, Eureka NVT, and Shiloh Nurseries. Of course the Friends of W. Kerr Scott Lake, Inc., led by Teresa Ford provided generous support and fund raising.

Thanks to all the generous support, the Corps was able to finish construction. The W. Kerr Scott project staff and the Corps' Operations and Maintenance Contractor, Eureka NVT, worked many long, hot hours to put the finishing touches on the project in time for the first 'curtain' on June 23d.

A Gala Opening

The opening night for the Forests Edge Amphitheater offered just about every element the facility hopes to bring to the area for the long run. The more than 850 seats were nearly all filled, despite an intermittent downpour that sent umbrellas popping up among the crowd. After a delightful buffet provided by Brushy Mountain Smokehouse for the donors and local officials, and a ribbon cutting ceremony, the show began in earnest.

Local musical talent, including W. Kerr Scott Assistant Operations Manager, R. G. Absher, provided music at the opening ceremony.

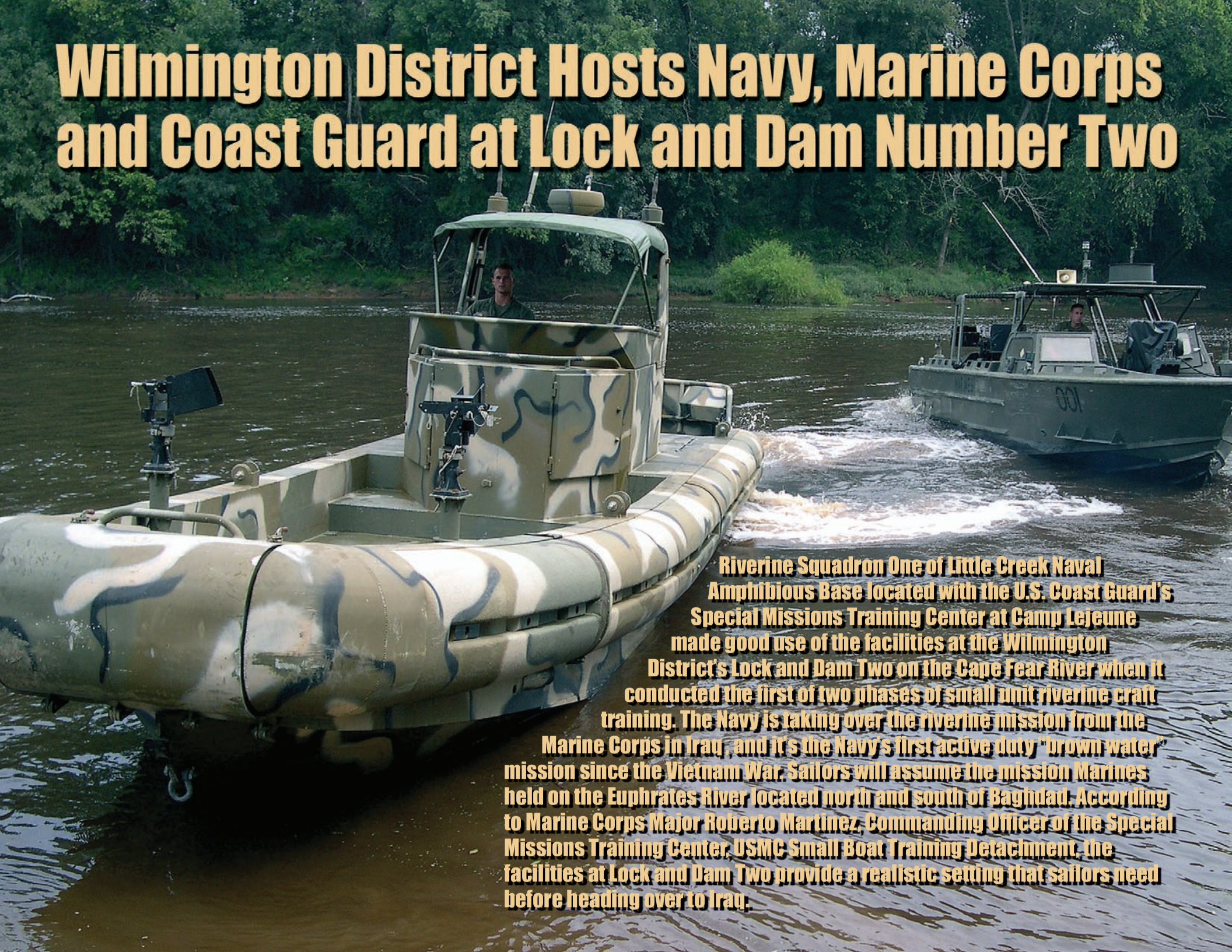
The starring musicians of the evening were none other than the Kingston Trio. Of course they included their famous hit "Hang Down Your Head, Tom Dooley," based on the earlier Alan Lomax ballad often sung by Doc Watson. Watson claimed his grandmother was a witness at the deathbed confession of Dooley's paramour Ann Melton, herself accused and tried for the murder, but acquitted on Dooley's word that his was the sole guilt. The foot-stomping hand-clapping good time ended with nightfall, when the Wilkes Playmakers began to work their magic.

The cast added a special scene in honor of the location of the amphitheater, "Ft. Hamby." This mountainside spot was once the site of a holdout Union stronghold known locally as Fort Hamby, although its denizens were as much marauders as soldiers. This western area in North Carolina was divided during the war, with Union and 'Secesh' sentiments running about equal. The players presented a convincing reenactment of the conflict between local combatants, as much wild marauders as they were serious soldiers.

The drama of Tom Dooley (Tom Dula) provided the rest of the evening's entertainment – and what a drama it was! The players showed that they had the ability to make use of the entire stage and its forested surroundings, making a convincing spectacle of guerilla ambushes, young lovers' trysting spots, and a murderer's lair under the soaring pines that overshadow the amphitheater. On stage a large cast in beautifully detailed period costumes played out the drama of village gossip, intrigue, romance, jealousy, and murderous crime.

The evening offered drama, music, and history, all built up from the shared dreams and work and contributions of public servants, private businesses and citizen donors. Ft. Hamby Park and the Forests Edge Amphitheater truly shows the potential of partnerships that pool our nations resources and citizen investment!

Wilmington District Hosts Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard at Lock and Dam Number Two



Riverine Squadron One of Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base located with the U.S. Coast Guard's Special Missions Training Center at Camp Lejeune made good use of the facilities at the Wilmington District's Lock and Dam Two on the Cape Fear River when it conducted the first of two phases of small unit riverine craft training. The Navy is taking over the riverine mission from the Marine Corps in Iraq , and it's the Navy's first active duty "brown water" mission since the Vietnam War. Sailors will assume the mission Marines held on the Euphrates River located north and south of Baghdad. According to Marine Corps Major Roberto Martinez, Commanding Officer of the Special Missions Training Center, USMC Small Boat Training Detachment, the facilities at Lock and Dam Two provide a realistic setting that sailors need before heading over to Iraq.